

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani
Janet Bramley

DATE: December 30, 1999

RE: Follow-up on CRT Clients in Trouble with the Law

A record number of readers commented and raised questions about our weekly PIP for December 3, 1999 (CRT Clients in Trouble with the Law: January through June 1999). We thank those of you who responded. Your comments are an invaluable guide to our development of indicators of mental health program performance in Vermont. This week's PIP responds to the two questions that were raised most often in these responses.

The most frequently asked question regards the kinds of offenses that were included in the analysis. The analysis focussed on all charges filed against adult residents in Vermont District Courts during January through June 1999. A total of 12,080 charges were filed during that period. These included 1,518 felony charges, 5,982 misdemeanor charges, 4,446 motor vehicle offenses, and 134 charges of violation of municipal ordinances. The largest proportion of motor vehicle offenses involved driving under the influence (48%) followed by driving with license suspended (36%). The felony and misdemeanor charges included a wide variety of offenses. Drug and alcohol offenses were prevalent (25%) as were charges of assault against people (16%), property crimes (13%), and public nuisance offenses (10%). Other felony and misdemeanor charges ranged from failure to appear (13%) to kidnapping and murder (less than 1%).

The second frequently asked question regarded the rate at which members of the general population were charged with crimes during this period and the possibility of differences in this rate among Vermont's community mental health service areas. The attached figures and table provide details on the rate at which residents of Vermont's 10

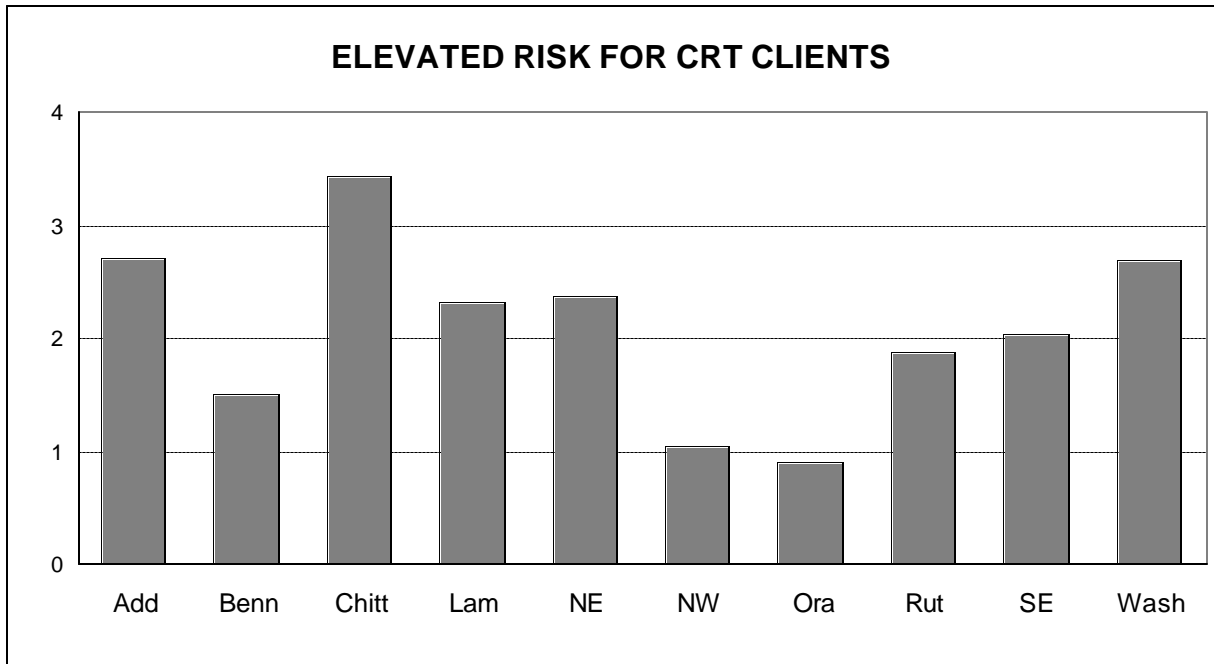
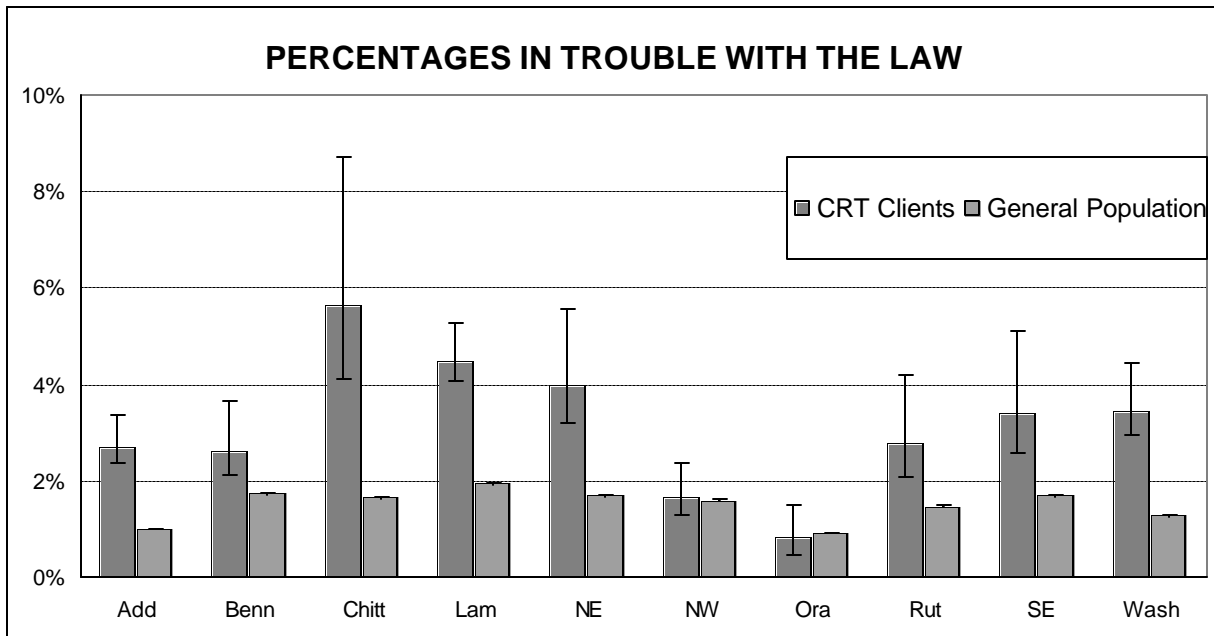
service areas were charged with a crime and a comparison of these rates to the rates for active CRT clients.

As you will see, there were substantial differences in the rate at which residents of Vermont's 10 community mental health service areas were charged with crimes during the first six months of 1999. Lamoille had the state's highest proportion of residents charged with a crime during the period under examination. Almost 2% of all residents of Lamoille County were charged with a crime during January through June of 1999. The lowest rates were in Orange and Addison Counties (about 1% each).

When the rates at which CRT clients get into trouble with the law are divided by the rates for the general population, the result is a measure of the amount of elevated risk of getting into trouble with the law that is associated with being a CRT client. In some regions of Vermont, this measure of elevated risk provides a picture of criminal justice involvement that is similar to the unadjusted rate of criminal justice involvement. Chittenden County, for instance, has the state's highest rate, and Orange County has the state's lowest rate for CRT clients on both measures. Lamoille County, by contrast, ranked second highest on the unadjusted rate but ranks fifth in terms of elevated risk. Addison County ranked seventh in terms of unadjusted criminal justice involvement of CRT clients, but ranks second highest in terms of elevated risk.

We thank you again for raising these important questions. We believe that it is important that this information be available to the people who will be using this outcome measure to evaluate community mental health program performance. We look forward to your comments and questions regarding this analysis, and any suggestions for further analysis that you may have. Just give us a call (802-241-2638) or send an email (jpandiani@ddmhs.state.vt.us).

IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW: CRT CLIENTS AND GENERAL POPULATION RATES: JAN - JUN FY 1999



Based on probabilistic estimation of overlap between data on active CRT caseload (from Vermont Department of Development; Mental Health Services Monthly Service Reports) and all persons charged with a crime (from Vermont Center for Justice Res District Court Filings). Elevated risk is calculated by dividing the CRT rate of getting into trouble with the law by the rate for the general population.

**IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW:
CRT CLIENTS AND GENERAL POPULATION RATES: JAN - JUN FY1999**

CLINIC	CRT CLIENTS			GENERAL POPULATION			ELEVATED
	Total Served	In Trouble	Rate (95% CI)	Total	In Trouble	Rate (95% CI)	RISK
Addison	182	4.9	2.7% (### #####)	27,267	272.1	1.0% (### #####)	2.7
Bennington	182	4.8	2.6% (### #####)	26,798	466.6	1.7% (### #####)	1.5
Chittenden	623	35.1	5.6% (### #####)	113,258	1,858.0	1.6% (### #####)	3.4
Lamoille	133	5.9	4.5% (### #####)	16,832	325.0	1.9% (### #####)	2.3
Northeast	373	14.9	4.0% (### #####)	44,812	754.4	1.7% (### #####)	2.4
Northwest	286	4.7	1.7% (### #####)	35,722	566.1	1.6% (### #####)	1.0
Orange	117	1.0	0.8% (### #####)	25,563	232.4	0.9% (### #####)	0.9
Rutland	317	8.8	2.8% (### #####)	47,865	703.3	1.5% (### #####)	1.9
Southeast	392	13.4	3.4% (### #####)	67,843	1,141.6	1.7% (### #####)	2.0
Washington	457	15.7	3.4% (### #####)	43,887	561.8	1.3% (### #####)	2.7
State	3,062.00	109.2	3.6% (### #####)	449,847	6,881.3	1.5% (### #####)	2.3